

THE SEDFIELD UNION RURAL SANITARY AUTHORITY.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit for your consideration my Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, which I have endeavoured to state as concisely as possible.

The Mortality from all causes during the year amounts to 534 of whom 160 were inmates of the Durham County Lunatic Asylum, reducing the mortality belonging to the Sanitary District to 374, upon which the death rate is estimated. Of this number 189 were males and 185 were females.

The Number of Births during the same period amounts to 717 of whom 375 were males and 342 were females.

The Population of the Sanitary District which at the last Census (1891), amounted to 18,222 exclusive of the inmates of the County Asylum, I now estimate at 18,640 upon which the Vital Statistics are calculated.

The Rate of Mortality in the Sedgfield and Bishopton Divisions (Agricultural) is 15·0 per thousand, and that of the Ferryhill, Cornforth and Trimdon Divisions, where the industrial pursuits are chiefly limestone and coal mining, it amounts to 21·3 per thousand.

The Birth Rate amounts to 38·3 per thousand, which is slightly below the average.

The Infant Mortality is considerably in excess of that of former years, 136 having succumbed within the first year, being at the rate of 189 per thousand births. This great mortality is attributed to impaired vitality from premature birth, Atelectasis from prolonged and difficult labour, Convulsions during the period of dentition. Marasmus from inherited and constitutional disease, Gastro-enteritis and diarrhoea from dietetic errors and other maladies incidental to infantile life.

Longevity—it is satisfactory to note is fully up to the average, 45 having attained the allotted period or 2·3 per thousand, of whom 34 were septuagenarians, 8 octogenarians, and 1 nonagenarian.

The Zymotic Class of Diseases is accountable as a cause of death in 64 cases, which is above the average, the death rate being 3·4 per thousand.

The Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1889, adopted by the Board only came into operation on the 1st May, furnishes us with a means of ascertaining the extent to which infectious disease prevails in the District. During the eight months that the Act has been in operation 233 notifications were received, 55 of these being Scarlatina, 11 Diphtheria, 94 Typhoid Fever, 53 Continued Fever, 4 Puerperal Fever, and 17 Erysipelas. About 200 of the cases were visited, in many cases repeated visits were paid, instructions given, both printed and verbal, disinfectants supplied, and the attention of your Inspector of Nuisances directed to such insanitary conditions that were calculated to endanger an extension of disease.

Small Pox.—An outbreak of the disease occurred at Fishburn. The first case came under my observation on the 21st February, the sufferer being the daughter of an Innkeeper and the case of the confluent type. On the 27th inst. the wife of an Aylum Attendant was attacked, the case being of an exceedingly mild character. The origin of the outbreak was at this time involved in obscurity but it subsequently transpired that her husband had a short time previously suffered from a Febrile attack which, for three days, rendered him unable to perform his duties, when a slight eruption appeared which passed through the gradation of cyclical changes, as in his wife's case, and that his daughter also suffered from a similar attack, the nature of which was not suspected nor were the cases deemed to be of sufficient importance to need the services of a medical man.

It appears that a patient sent from Gateshead, to the Asylum, was placed in the ward of which this attendant had charge, who shortly after developed symptoms of Small Pox and was removed to the Sanatorium of that institution. This case was, you may remember, referred to in the concluding remarks contained in my Annual Report for 1893. We are I think, therefore, justified in assuming that the outbreak originated from this source, the daughter of the attendant having been visited during her illness by her companion from the public house.

Scarlatina occurred sporadically and of a mild type generally throughout the District, fifty-five cases were notified resulting in three deaths. Of this number eleven cases occurred in Sedgefield, four at Bishopton, four at Great Stainton, six at the Saw Mill Cottages, Bradbury, sixteen at the Trimdon Collieries, three at Cornforth, one at Bishop Middleham, five at Metal Bridge, one at Chilton Lanc, two at Ferryhill Village, one at Ferryhill Station, and one at Woodham. One death occurred at Ferryhill and two at the Trimdon Collieries. Had prompt and energetic action not been taken and isolation and hygienic precautions strictly enjoined, I have reason to believe a much wider dissemination of the disease would have occurred.

Diphtheria.—Of the ten cases that were notified nine occurred at West Cornforth resulting in two deaths. This disease has prevailed here for a considerable time, 3 deaths having occurred prior to the Act being adopted, which I can only attribute to the insanitary condition of the surroundings.

One case occurred at Trimdon Grange Colliery which was imported from Haswell.

One case (not notified) also occurred at Low Spennymoor which terminated fatally. The first intimation I had of this case was through the Certificate of the Registrar of Deaths. It appears that the medical man was called in at the last moment. How the case originated I was unable to ascertain.

Enteric or Typhoid Fever which prevailed to a considerable extent throughout the north-eastern part of the county during the greater part of the year and two deaths occurred in the Sedgefield District prior to the Notification Act coming into operation.

The number of notifications received amounted to 94, resulting in nine deaths. Five cases occurred in two dwellings of modern construction, with separately enclosed yards and provided with drains, situated in East Howle Row, Low Spennymoor. The smell of sewer gas was distinctly perceptible and investigation revealed the fact that the lower floors of these two houses had been relaid and those entrusted with the work in their great wisdom laid agricultural drain pipes under the floors communicating directly with the sewer to get rid of the dampness complained of, which sufficiently accounts for the outbreak.

A serious outbreak of Enteric Fever occurred at Trimdon Colliery on or about 12th July. The first case was that of a man who had removed from a neighbouring colliery village, (Wingate), and shewed symptoms of the disease three or four days after his arrival, which was succeeded by about fourteen other cases within the next two months, and during the autumn other cases occurred, twenty-three cases being notified.

On the 14th September a case occurred at Trimdon Grange Colliery, the origin of which it was difficult to determine with any degree of accuracy, the disease spread rapidly particularly during the month of October, during November considerable abatement took place and by the end of the year it had ceased to exist, fifty cases having been notified. It may be worthy of remark that the water supply of the Trimdon and Trimdon Grange collieries is obtained from the pits, that at the Trimdon Grange being abundant whilst that of the Trimdon colliery was cut off, working operations having ceased and the machinery dismantled owing to a change in the proprietorship; great scarcity prevailed during the unprecedented drought that we experienced, and much inconvenience and some suffering was the inevitable consequence, and many persons were known to have obtained water from impure sources, notwithstanding this fact the incidence of the disease appears to have fallen more heavily upon the inhabitants of Trimdon Grange which leads me to infer that the disease was imported and not due to the water supply.

At Sedgefield six cases of Enteric Fever occurred in one family which was imported from Wingate. At Bishopton two cases occurred one of which was imported from Stockton, the other case is of doubtful origin; there is however a culvert with which the house drain communicates which would be best replaced with a sewer of sanitary pipes.

Four cases occurred at West Cornforth, Cornforth Lane, and Coxhoe.

Continued Fever may be regarded as a modified form of Enteric Fever differing probably more in degree than in kind. The two diseases co-existed at the Trimdon Collieries, 17 cases occurring at the Trimdon Colliery whilst 33 occurred at Trimdon Grange. Two cases also occurred at Old Trimdon and one at Metal Bridge making a total of 53 cases from which no death resulted.

Puerperal Fever.—Of the five cases all of which terminated fatally four were notified, the other occurred prior to the Act coming into operation. The necessity of discontinuing attendance on other cases for a time and paying close attention to hygienic measures was strictly enjoined where the attendance during child birth was rendered by unqualified persons.

Measles prevailed generally during the summer months. As the disease is not included in the Schedule of diseases to which the Act applies not even an approximate idea can be formed of the number of cases; five deaths are however registered as having resulted from this cause.

Influenza of which a few cases occurred about the end of October became generally prevalent during the month of November, and subsided rapidly during December. The outbreak was of a less virulent character and rarely accompanied by the serious complications which characterised the outbreak of 1891-2, and one death resulted from this cause.

Phthisis Pulmonalis is accountable for 29 deaths, being at the rate of 1·5 per thousand and about the average of former years.

Diseases of the Respiratory Organs have been the cause of 46 deaths with a rate of 2·5 per thousand, which is considerably below the average, due probably to the exceptionally favourable meteorological conditions that have prevailed during the year.

The General Sanitation of the District has not been neglected.

The Sewerage Works of the Authority have received the usual attention as regards flushing and cleansing of tanks and outlets.

The structural work carried out during the year is in Sedgefield 80 yards of 12 in., Trimdon 250 yards of 12 in. Cornforth 50 yards of 12 in. and 120 yards of 9 in. sewer has been laid down. House drainage has been much improved, and a great number of gully traps have been substituted for the open yard grates.

The Water Supply of the District is derived from the Weardale and Shildon Water Co.'s mains, public and private pumps and dipping wells, and in the colliery villages is pumped from the "Yellow Sands" beneath the magnesian limestone which yields an abundant supply of excellent water for domestic purposes as its analysis testifies.

All the pumps belonging to the Sanitary Authority have been maintained in a thoroughly efficient condition, the water supply of Trimdon Village, which is derived from three dipping wells in the neighbourhood, at all times scanty and of questionable quality, has been lamentably deficient owing to the unprecedented drought we experienced during the past summer, and a supply from some other source is imperatively demanded. A water supply for Trimdon Colliery Village has been obtained from the Grange Colliery and hydrants are being erected to bring it within the specified 200 feet of dwellings.

The Common Lodging Houses, of which there are three in the Sanitary District for the accommodation of 52 persons, have been regularly inspected and found to be maintained in a satisfactory condition. The average number of lodgers frequenting them amount to 222 weekly or 11,544 per annum. The number of "Casuals" sheltered at the Workhouse during the year amount to 4,429, which is a considerable increase of that of former years. The average of the previous four years being 2,792. Boards of Guardians appear to be greatly exercised to devise means to deter these poor wretched homeless wanderers from seeking the shelter of the Casual Ward. This object would be most easily accomplished by closing them altogether, but would it not be better to provide some place of shelter until the hour of admission arrives, instead of compelling them to loiter in the lanes and streets exposed to the elements at all seasons of the year, frequently drenched to the skin with swollen limbs and ulcerated feet, and suffering from all the ailments due to hunger, fatigue, and exposure? Apart from mere humane considerations a closer supervision should be exercised over this class that would not only do much to ameliorate their condition but also prevent the dissemination of contagious and infectious disease throughout the country as has been sufficiently exemplified by the recent outbreak of Small Pox.

Slaughter Houses within the District, (40 in number) have been regularly inspected and found to be in a satisfactory condition.

Cow Sheds and Dairies have been subjected to periodical inspection and found to be maintained in a satisfactory condition. There are now 102 persons upon the Register with accommodation for 487 cows.

Building Operations carried out in the District are eight new houses erected at Trimdon, eight at Cornforth, three at Ferryhill, and two at Sedgefield. Seventeen houses have been reconstructed at Trimdon Colliery, and others are in progress. The erection of Privies and Ashpits are making satisfactory progress at Trimdon Colliery and 32 blocks have been completed for the accommodation of 129 houses and others are in progress in compliance with the order of the Castle Eden Bench.

Nuisances arising from accumulation of house refuse have been numerous as usual and 265 legal notices have been served for their abatement, whilst 5712 nuisances have been abated, ten lots of bedding etc., two houses, and one school have been disinfected.

I may mention that the cleansing of Ashpits and privies in the Cornforth township still constitutes a serious difficulty and the contracting for this work is urgently needed. The nuisances at the Mainsforth Rows, Chilton Lane still continue to exist which demand the attention of the Board.

Legal Proceedings have only been resorted to in one case. An Order was granted by the Justices of the Durham Petty Sessional Division against the owners of eight back-to-back houses at West Cornforth where Diphtheria has prevailed for a considerable time, which was complied with.

The Infectious Diseases Hospital question still continues to occupy the attention of the Board who are unable to arrive at any definite conclusion, with respect to the most suitable locality for its erection, centrally situated as regards area and density of population; a site in proximity to good roads, possessing an abundant water supply and affording facilities for medical supervision.

The Committee appointed by the Board inspected the temporary hospitals erected at Houghton-le-Spring, Rainton Gate, Chester-le-Street, were unanimously of the opinion it was inexpedient to erect a Hospital of that description, and they were fully convinced of the correctness of this view on inspecting the newly erected Fever Hospital at Stockton-on-Tees.

The Board is moreover awaiting the issue of the measure initiated by Lord Thring in the House of Lords which is expected shortly to become law, to enable County Councils to provide Hospitals for the reception of Infectious Diseases, and who may possibly elaborate a scheme for their erection throughout the Rural districts.

Such, Gentlemen, is a brief a résumé of the years work which it is impossible to particularize more minutely without extending it to an inordinate length.

I have appended a tabulated statement relating to the Births and Deaths within the Sanitary District during the sixteen years that I have had the honour of acting in the capacity of Medical Officer of Health which I think will be found not only interesting but useful as a means of comparison.

I may mention that I am greatly indebted to Mr. Snowdon, your Surveyor and Inspector of Nuisances, for his prompt attention and assistance, and also to the Medical men practicing in the District, for their kindness and courtesy on all occasions.

In conclusion I have great pleasure in stating that with the exception of a slight recrudescence of Influenza the health of the Sanitary District is satisfactory.

I am Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

GEO. R. SHERATON.

Medical Officer of Health.

Sedgefield January, 16th, 1894.

Rate per 1000 of Population.						
Infant mortality rate per 1000 births	Zymotic rate.	Phthisis rate.	Bronchitis Pleurisy Pneumonia rate.	Heart Disease rate.	Injuries rate.	
131	5.1	1.4	2.6	0.6	0.8	
132	1.5	1.4	2.1	1.0	0.6	
191	3.8	1.6	3.1	1.1	0.4	
137	3.2	2.1	2.2	0.9	0.7	
152	3.6	1.7	2.0	1.1	5.0	
169	3.2	1.6	3.8	1.3	1.2	
152	4.2	1.8	2.3	1.3	0.8	
191	1.9	1.7	3.3	0.9	0.2	
152	2.3	1.5	3.2	0.8	0.5	
180	2.5	1.7	3.6	1.3	0.6	
134	1.7	1.5	2.2	0.9	0.6	
154	2.2	1.3	2.9	0.8	0.7	
164	3.0	1.3	3.8	0.9	0.4	
166	1.2	1.5	5.7	1.3	0.4	
154	2.4	1.0	3.5	0.7	0.4	
189	3.4	1.5	2.5	0.7	0.6	



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REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

OF THE

SEDGEEFIELD UNION

RURAL SANITARY DISTRICT

For the year ended

DECEMBER, 31st, 1893.

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